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ABSTRACT

This 2-part report summarizes the Council of Europe's 1977 colloquy on cable television, local radio, and video, and presents the chairman's report on media and public usefulness. Problem areas addressed in the section on public service applications of the media include ensuring public access to the media, financing local radio and television, keeping functions separate, establishing a system of control, and research into public needs and communications. A program of action for the European community is proposed and current research in public access to the media currently underway in the various member nations is outlined. The chairman's report examines several factors implicit in public service and the media: pluralistic organization, diversified finance, separation of such functions as production and distribution, co-ordination and supervision of experiments by ad hoc authorities, and adaptation of experiments to real communication needs. (RAO)

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EUROPEAN EXPERIMENTS IN CABLE TELEVISION : LOCAL RADIO AND VIDEO : LESSONS TO BE LEARNED AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

Strasbourg Colloquy
11 - 13 May 1977

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COMMITTEE FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL
EDUCATION AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Colloquy on European experiments in
cable television, local radio and video:
lessons to be learnt and prospects for the future
(Strasbourg 11-13 May 1977)

REPORT

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FOREWORD

This report consists of two parts. The first is a summary by the Secretariat of the main points covered by the discussions; the second is a note by Mr Robert Wangermee, Chairman of the colloquy, Director General of Belgian radio and television (French broadcasts), at the end of the colloquy.

FIRST PART: SUMMARY DEBATES

I. Background and context

For some years the Council of Europe has been actively concerned with the mass media in various sectors of its programme.

In the cultural sphere, in accordance with the overall objective laid down by the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CCC) it is concerned with "analysing possible development of the role of the institutions and instruments of cultural communication, particularly the mass media, in the light of the concepts of permanent education and cultural democracy".

To this end, it has held several colloquies of specialists and governmental experts and has commissioned numerous studies and a consolidated report (a second is now being prepared).

Alongside the social and cultural aspects, the Council of Europe is dealing with the numerous legal problems raised by the rapid and complex development of the mass media. This activity was originally limited to television but has now been extended to all the media. Pursuant to a decision of the Committee of Ministers, a Committee of Experts on the Mass Media with very broad terms of reference was set up last year.

As part of the CCC's programme, a colloquy was held in Strasbourg on 11-13 May 1977 on the theme "European experiments in cable television, local radio and video" (1). As the colloquy coincided with a meeting of the sub-committee of the Committee of Experts on the Mass Media, the Secretary of that committee had an opportunity to explain its terms of reference and activities. His statement gave rise to a fairly lively discussion. The Chairman of the colloquy, Mr Robert Wangermee, Director General of Radio diffusion Télévision Belge (French-language broadcasts), who for several years was Director of the CCC's "Communication" project and is now the project's technical adviser and animateur, expressed great surprise and regret, in which the meeting supported him, that these legal activities were not formally co-ordinated with the CCC's work. Whatever the value of such activities, the participants in the colloquy, most of whom had important responsibilities of their own in the development of the experiments necessitated by the problems of the media under consideration (video and active or passive cable television), considered that their ideas, observations and practical experience would make an invaluable contribution to any legal instruments that were in preparation or envisaged.

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(1) See list of participants in Appendix I. 6

The following points, for example, had been dealt with at various times in CCC studies and symposia:

- rules governing distribution firms and organisations, structures and procedures for supervision of broadcasts;
- acceptance of and restrictions on advertising;
- access and participation by the general public;
- assessment of existing or proposed experiments.

The colloquy requested the Secretariat to ask the CCC how it intended to contribute to the essential task of harmonising these diverse activities. In the absence of such harmonisation the participants, who greatly valued the work done thus far in other respects(see page5) would have to review the advisability of European co-operation.

II. Main subjects of discussion

A. Conclusions of the preparatory studies (1) and supplementary information provided at the colloquy by their authors

1. The main problems involved in applying the principle that the media constitute a public service are: ensuring public access to the mass media; financing local radio and television stations; keeping functions separate, establishing a system of control; and research into public needs in the matter of communications.

1.1 - free access by the public to audio-visual media can be ensured only by pluralist management of such media;

- such freedom per se will not guarantee the development of new forms of communication, as the Italian example demonstrates,
- pluralism can be ensured by pluralist representation on bodies authorised to make radio or television broadcasts.

This system is currently being used in Belgium, the Netherlands and the local radio stations of the BBC. The important thing is that the scheme adopted should permit democratic expression.

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(1) The list appears in Appendix 2.

The Swindon Viewpoint experiments in the United Kingdom have provided the opportunity to study the possibilities and limitations of a system which seeks to ensure pluralism through direct election of a local radio and television chain's officials by the community they serve.

- The importance of video for training and initiation to cable television and television in general was again emphasised, as was the need to integrate the various audio-visual media.

1.2 Financing is one of the most important problems facing community radio and television stations, the latter in particular.

On-going or completed experiments show great diversity in possible sources of finance:

- grants from the state, region or local authority,
- grants from national broadcasting organisations;
- grants from local private industry,
- dues paid by subscribers,
- payment for services commissioned from the television station (eg school broadcasts);
- provision of technical resources by cable television companies,
- advertising, although it is not very much in favour and there is a desire to reduce it as far as possible.

Lastly, it is considered essential to diversify sources of finance as much as possible so as to ensure the independent management of stations.

1.3 Separation of functions: responsibility for financing, production and distribution must be kept separate if freedom of expression is to be ensured.

1.4 Co-ordination and supervision: methods of co-ordination and supervision must be devised to ensure the smooth running of a decentralised system. However, disputes frequently arise regarding the system of supervision to be adopted, the authority to which the power of supervision should be given, etc.

1.5 "Needs": an investigation into the needs that arise in the communications field (aspirations and new requirements) is necessary and calls for methods of enquiry suited to the different types of audience. (See item E of the second part of the report.)

B. Programme of action

This should be based on four main themes:

1. Information

1.1 The participants were anxious that the CCC should contribute to the best of its ability to the spread of information of the mass media, inter alia through the use of audio-visual media.

With regard to written information, an earlier suggestion was taken up to the effect that the Council of Europe should consider starting a specialised information bulletin with the aim of rapid transmission of up-to-date information on projected, on-going or recently completed experiments to governments and specialists (persons active in culture, animateurs, radio and television programmers). In this connection, it would nevertheless be necessary to check that there was really a need to be met and to examine whether such a bulletin might not be launched as part of the CCC's cultural development policies project. The meeting of persons responsible for information relay posts, scheduled to be held in Strasbourg on 8-9 November 1977, might be the occasion for more thorough consideration of this question.

The dissemination of information is indeed a fundamental task of the Council of Europe (Resolution No. 7 of the Conference of Ministers of Culture at Oslo), and some of the Council's activities in this field already take the form of a provision of services (as in the case of Council of Europe publications), as should the system for collecting and disseminating information devised in collaboration with national research institutes, which system could probably include the work of disseminating information on the mass media.

1.2 The participants reiterated the desirability of the Council of Europe systematically continuing the research it had been carrying out since the beginning of the project, in the interests of specialists and governments. In this connection it should be noted that:

- One participant, a specialist teacher, a video practitioner, a journalist managing a television news programme and a member of various national bodies concerned with audio-visual media, wrote, "Nowhere else can one find such varied and up-to-date documentation on the development of ideas and practice in this field in Europe. This is an essential working instrument".

- Another participant, in his capacity as a civil servant and teacher, wrote, "The studies of the Council of Europe are daily information and working tools for myself, my colleagues and animateurs. To stop producing such studies would be to plunge into confusion all the experiments which our countries are undertaking under very difficult conditions".

New themes were proposed for studies to be carried out in connection with the 1978 symposium (see agenda item 11). The following provisional themes were formulated:

- experiments carried out in non-European countries such as Canada, Australia, the United States and Japan (it would appear that the studies currently being carried out by UNESCO are concerned mainly with developing countries),

- the technical possibilities of taking into consideration the right of expression of non-traditional groups in the allocation of frequencies, this study being based on opinions expressed by government experts and a survey of the existing situation,

- perhaps, in an additional note, the studies carried out in Canada.

The other main themes will be decided following consultations with the Chairman of the colloquy at a later stage.

1.3 A partial assessment was prepared of the research underway in a number of member states:

United Kingdom

1.30 Milton Keynes (October 1977-78): the communication studies group of the University of London has prepared a series of preliminary studies, which will be gradually added to.

1.31 Swindon Viewpoint

The fourth research project of Professor Halloran deals with the following points:

- the public's use of and reactions to the services offered by Swindon Viewpoint,
- relations with the press and the local authority,
- financial difficulties.

1.32 The Netherlands

A research document on cable television and on radio experiments should be available towards the end of the year.

1.33 Switzerland

The work on free video could usefully be brought up to date.

1.34 Italy

The region of Tuscany is working on a local research project with experts on regional and local policy.

1.35 Belgium

University research into specific cases is being carried out.

With regard to the cable television experiments authorised by the Ministry of French Culture, it would be as well to wait until several are underway before beginning a study, which could provide very useful information.

1.36 Numerous video-bus experiments are being carried out in the United Kingdom, France and Italy.

2. Experimentation

The participants repeated their support for the idea suggested at the Paris Colloquy of setting up "a European system to publicise, scientifically monitor, compare and evaluate a selection of experiments in videography and cable television" (1). They stressed the unique value of the widespread experiments

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(1) See page 18 of the report of the colloquy of 22-24 October 1975 (CCC/DC (75) 19).

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currently being carried out in the fields of passive and active cable television (community television), video as an independent instrument (for animation, teaching, etc) and local radio. They considered that the Council of Europe could encourage governments in this direction, despite the independent or private nature of the experiments.

The following points emerge from the remarks made at the colloquy and the participants' subsequent written contributions:

2.1 Systematic observation of on-going or projected experiments

2.10 Objectives: to provide member states with the opportunity of systematically acquiring a better understanding of the advantages or drawbacks of initiatives taken elsewhere (or in their own countries) with a view to meeting the problems they face or which they will face sooner or later as a result of the development of technology, the expansion of social and cultural community work and the increasing desire of the general public to have a say in decision-making.

A second objective, in the light of the interest shown by governments in such activities, would be to encourage further activities of this type indirectly.

2.11 Methodology: some experiments or completed projects worthy of attention because of their success or failure should be systematically observed over a fairly long period of time.

2.12 Selection of experiments: this should be done in consultation with the governments concerned.

2.13 Engagement of observers: this would take into account their experience, their knowledge of the work and aims of the Council of Europe and their participation in the work of certain of its organs.

2.14 Assessment criteria: a meeting of the future observers should be convened to draw up an overall plan, however, rather than establish a detailed set of theoretical criteria it would be necessary to draw up a general list of questions to which concrete answers can be given in most cases.

2.15 Duration: it was considered that for reasons often inherent in the experiments themselves, the work of observation, if it was to be valid, should last some two years at least for instance from January 1979 (preparation in 1978) to November 1980.

2.15 Publicity: the project should not be launched casually and its conclusion should be attended with a certain amount of publicity.

2.2 Discussion and planning

The meeting considered that, to ensure the smooth running of the project, it would be advisable to set up informally, according to the needs manifested as the project progresses, a small group of advisers with high-level responsibilities for planning, execution or research in their countries. This would have two main advantages:

- it would make it possible to give a common focus to various operations which hitherto may have appeared to be unrelated to the overall project;

- it would bring to the attention of the Committee on the Mass Media important legal questions being asked by audio-visual practitioners, one of which is the subject of a recommendation in the next section of this report.

3. Symposium

Since the start of the project, the Signatory States have not yet had the opportunity to examine together the lessons learned from the activities carried out with the participation of specialists at the various colloquies. The symposium included in the draft programme of the CCC, tentatively scheduled for the end of 1978, could provide an excellent opportunity to remedy this situation. It would have the dual purpose of taking stock of research and activities and locating areas for attention or further study. To ensure continuity, a number of practitioners and theoreticians who have been contributing to the project from the outset should be given the opportunity to take part.

The representative of the Committee for Out-of-School Education at the colloquy will study the possibilities offered by his own country in this respect.

4. Recommendations

The States Signatories to the Cultural Convention should take into consideration, when allocating frequencies in their respective countries, the right of self-expression through the media by non-traditional groups, who are increasingly seeking access to the entire range of electromagnetic facilities as a means of disseminating cultural information.

Through its programme for collecting and disseminating information on the electronic media, the committee should contribute to the supply of information to international and national authorities concerned with the allocation of frequencies and also to feedback from those authorities to the Council of Europe.

The unscheduled debate on the harmonisation of activities relating to the media spilled over on to other agenda items, and so the participants were unable to translate into detailed recommendations the hopes, wishes and observations formulated during the colloquy. They therefore agreed that the programme of action presented in this report should be considered as having the force of recommendations.

SECOND PART: CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

From the point of view of social and cultural development, the most desirable organisational principle on which to base the so-called "community" media is public usefulness (or the public interest, according to some).

This principle will in fact ensure:

- management in the public interest, sheltered from any pressure groups, particularly political and commercial;
- representation of all the forces in the community;
- broad access to the instrument;
- variety of its uses.

The creation of a public service implies several factors:

- pluralistic organisation;
- diversified finance;
- separation of certain functions (production, distribution);
- co-ordination and supervision of experiments by ad hoc authorities;
- adaptation of experiments to real communication needs.

A. Pluralism

Pluralism does, in some forms, offer the most appropriate kind of organisation to ensure satisfactory "social control" and democratic participation. It should be flexibly used, taking account of individual social contexts. Ways must be found to ensure the representation of minorities, especially the most under-privileged groups in society.

The most significant experiments carried out so far - in Britain, the Netherlands and Italy - reveal three types of pluralism: "additive" pluralism in Italy, "integrated" pluralism in the Netherlands and "elective" pluralism in Britain.

1. "Additive" pluralism

This kind of pluralism is made up of the juxtaposition within one country of a great number of experiments of different origins.

The "Italian case", which is unique in Europe, has the advantage for an observer of being a life-size "laboratory" where the most varied experiments thrive and wither in apparently unrestricted freedom.

Nevertheless, this freedom implies certain hazards:

It is to be feared that it might eventually lead to the formation of private oligopolies, through commercial programming often taken to absurd lengths (continuous film shows and advertising). In order to be profitable, these oligopolies will concentrate on the "developed" part of the country (70% of the broadcasting stations are in the north). A profound imbalance is therefore likely to appear between community stations and commercial stations and between the north and the south, the latter being by and large poorly served in terms of communications.

But certain changes in this "uncontrolled" pluralism can already be foreseen. A number of projects for supervising local radio and television are already being prepared by the political parties and will undoubtedly be brought forward for debate in the coming months.

The main participants in this discussion will be the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party. For opposite reasons, both groups favour limiting the wave-lengths attributed to local stations, which will inevitably decrease accordingly. The allocation of frequencies would be controlled by ad hoc authorities at regional or national level.

Consequently, two possibilities may be envisaged:

- attributing public service status to all local stations (position adopted by the Left and the progressive wing of the Christian Democrats). If this is so, available channels would be allocated to associations on the basis of specific criteria: strict limitation of advertising, local production of the majority of programmes, performance of certain services etc;

- private ownership, limited exclusively by the reduction in the number of stations. In this eventuality, it is obvious that only the wealthiest commercial stations and the most firmly established political ones would survive.

2. "Integrated" pluralism

This is a form of pluralism subject to regulations and allowing for the representation of different groups and tendencies within a single institution. All the Dutch experiments are modelled on this system, which has also just been adopted in Belgium.

In the Netherlands, experiments with cable television - which are now almost complete - have shown that this technique undoubtedly permits the hoped-for participation and access; it must be admitted, however, that society as a whole has not taken as much advantage of it as expected. Frequently, the few local radio and television enthusiasts - almost all amateurs - are those who participate most. The two experimental local radio stations - STAD in Amsterdam and SROB near Eindhoven - are also organised according to the integrated pluralism formula; participation by the various groups of the population which have a say in the radio organisation seems to be satisfactory.

3. "Elective" pluralism

In Europe, the British "viewpoint" experiment in Swindon is so far the only case of the deliberate appropriation of broadcasting by a community (apart from a few Italian experiments of limited scope). Swindon viewpoint has become a community instrument through the direct election of its officials and with local and collective financial backing.

Swindon, a public resource centre whose activities have spread from television to radio, constitutes in the view of many observers a model: it has succeeded in striking an apparently satisfactory balance between the direct intervention of members of the community and the continuity of a basic team which ensures the stability of the experiment.

Cable television was introduced in another English town, Milton Keynes, at the beginning of this year. Preparations are also being made there for the self-management of programmes by the local community. The experiment operates through a post office cable network; it is organised by a group of "facilitators" who provide guidance for institutions, groups and individuals seeking access to "Channel 40".

The Deventer (Netherlands) experiment functioned for 2 years according to a system similar to the one in Swindon.

4. Technical pluralism

The experts have recommended the "pluralistic" integration of video organisation structures (cf Council of Europe's project of recommendation for the creation of audio-visual centres (1)) and local and community television structures.

It is well known that video and cable television are closely interrelated: the greatest successes in local cable television have been due to preparatory activities conducted with video. In the future, it is to be hoped that no cable television experiment will be launched without "pre-animation" by video.

As regards audio-visual centres in particular, whose creation was recommended by the Council of Europe, many experts feel that they should be based, like cable television, on a pluralistic organisation. These centres should in no way be artificial creations, grafted on to a community from outside. They must be an organic part of existing structures already adapted to the needs of the community. In general, it is essential to guard against a kind of "vidoelogical monism", tending to consider video as an independent (some have even said "charismatic") instrument, which on its own would be both the support and the driving force of a certain type of action to promote "cultural development" or "social change". After all, video is only one medium amongst others, and it must form an integral part of a broader socio-cultural strategy. No doubt it has its own characteristics, but these can be developed only if it is supported by other measures. The failure of many video experiments may be explained by the poor integration of the instrument with its environment. In additon to cable television and video, there is renewed interest in other techniques, in particular broadcasting by Hertzian radio waves. The use and effectiveness of cable networks are in fact limited by technical, economic and sociological constraints. It was in Italy, to begin with, that many stations began to transfer from cable to broadcasting over the air, where they found adequate wave-lengths still unoccupied. This example was followed by CTV promoters in other countries, eg Britain ("Channel 40" hopes to transfer to radio-wave broadcasting). In addition to picture transmission techniques, there has been a rediscovery of sound: many stations now broadcast both radio and television programmes (eg Swindon).

B. Financing arrangements

Everyone is aware that the form an organisation takes is largely dependent on the financial backing available.

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(1) See Paris Colloquy 22-24 October 1975, doc. CCC/DC (76) 19.

There is a general tendency to say that, in an experimental period, the users of local and community television cannot be asked to pay for the proposed service. This means that funds must be provided from elsewhere, enabling those who conduct the experiment to be more independent. The main role should be played by public bodies: ministries, local and regional authorities, cultural and social organisations etc. This principle does not exclude private enterprise but it implies a limitation of the extent to which private financiers can influence cultural activity. In an experimental period, the private sector generally plays only a limited part, mainly through advertising, which is itself restricted. (There is one exception, the now inoperative UK experiments, entirely run by cable.)

It may be noted that, in the present phase of experimentation, methods of financing are very varied. Nevertheless, a large proportion of the funds comes from the public sector.

- In the Netherlands and in Belgium, these funds are provided by the central authorities, any commercial contribution being strictly banned. In the Netherlands, however, local communities have to assume financial responsibility for experiments, after the trial period. It is intended to make CTV facilities show a profit, for example by organising services in exchange for payment: eg educational broadcasts at the request of local schools.

- In Belgium, an effort is also being made to come up with a method of diversifying resources, which are too sparingly granted by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.. (12 experiments have been authorised in the French-speaking areas by the Ministry of French Cultural Affairs on the advice of an "audio-visual advisory group". 4 CTV stations have begun functioning more or less regularly in Gilly, Gembloux, Liège and Rochefort. The management of each experiment is defined in a 4-party agreement concluded between the ministry, the municipal authority, the cable television company and the pluralistic association responsible for programming.) In the case of the Liège CTV experiment, the most important attempted so far, an agreement has been reached entitling the municipality to a number of news broadcasts (produced by the CTV team), in exchange for substantial funding. A slightly different formula had been adopted in BBC local radio stations, whose consultative boards include representatives of the municipal authorities, who may request certain programmes to be produced in exchange for payment.

  Generally speaking, many experts consider that it is acceptable for local authorities to have a certain say in financing radio and television broadcasting, on condition however, that their activity is subject to specific rules and that programmes are inserted into reserved compartments.

- In Switzerland, the Federal Council (Department of Transport and Telecommunications) is studying 7 applications for permanent broadcasting rights from La Chaux-de-fonds, Yverdon, Fribourg, Sion, Délémont, Renens and Vernier. According to the first information received, the concessions will be subject to public law and will be granted to municipalities; publicity will be banned from programmes.

- At Swindon, in England, funding is of local origin and is organised on a pluralistic basis. A certain amount of advertising is permitted but does not attract many clients.

- In Italy, most of the "stations" are backed both by private funds and by commercial advertising. Some experiments, however, have been organised in the form of co-operatives (which is an interesting innovation from a European point of view and one which deserves closer study), or they are supported by philosophical groups or political parties.

According to some experts, cable television companies should be made to contribute towards production costs. In several European countries, cable companies already draw substantial resources from "passive" cable television. Any financial contributions on their part to "active" experiments would serve to redistribute commercial income from cable television for the benefit of cultural development. However, the contributions of cable companies should in no way give them any rights over the content of programmes.

Other experts suggest that all the resources available for local cable television should be centralised in "community" funds (at national or regional level), whence they would be redistributed to the various experiments. These funds would be jointly managed by contributors and would act as a "filter" between the financial sponsors of CTV and the users.

C. Separation of functions

In general, the experts advocate the separation of the financing, producing and distributing functions within the organisational structures of CTV, by instituting separate ad hoc bodies.

There have been proposals to introduce a system based on the "common-carrier" principle in Europe. This is under study in the United States and should be given careful consideration in Europe.

D. Co-ordination and control

1. Specific organs

Any widely decentralised system requires effective co-ordination and control authorities. Thus several countries have instituted national or regional audio-visual harmonisation and consultation bodies. The most recent creations are doubtless the regional committees being set up in Italy to promote the devolution of radio and television broadcasting.

Designed as collective decision-making, appeal and regulatory bodies responsible for initiating research projects, they have met with varying success. Only in North America do they seem to operate really effectively. It would be useful to study in greater detail the way these bodies function in different countries in order to derive guidance for others.

Some experts lay great stress on drawing the attention of the Council of Europe CCC to the advantage of creating institutions in member states to supervise the correct application of organisational guidelines for local and community radio and television stations.

2. Allocation of wavelengths

The tasks attributed to these bodies might include the management of the frequency spectrum (in the United States broadcasting licences are allocated by the FCC; in Canada, by the CRTC). Such management will become progressively more important as applications for broadcasting increase not only for cable networks, but also for Hertzian waves. Experience in Italy has shown that there are considerable wavelength resources which are not generally known, owing to the discretion of the official post office authorities in this matter.

Thorough study should reveal what is really available for local broadcasting in the different European countries. The findings should be made accessible to all interested communities. The allocation of wavelengths is no doubt an internal problem to be solved by each country. At international level, however, government authorities should be made aware of the question by being invited to take account of local requests for frequencies. The experts hope that the CCC may produce a formal recommendation on this subject.

E. Adapting experiments to users "needs"

1. Needs

These needs, as we know, do not appear spontaneously; potential users of a new technology are generally unaware of the possibilities it may offer (hence one's astonishment at seeing official surveys reaching the preconceived conclusion that certain needs do not exist, by merely extrapolating from existing

types of behaviour - cf KTK report). It is only through patient experimental work that any reliable indications may be obtained regarding new requirements in the field of social communications.

Certain pointers have already emerged from initial systematic research. For instance, in the Swindon CTV study, J Halloran reports that the need for local communication is mostly felt in the younger layers of the adult population. It does seem that young people discover a new interest in local affairs through local television.

There are experiments, on the other hand, which seem to indicate that direct participation of the public in CTV corresponds to a less pressing need than was first thought. These experiments may lead one to believe that it is unrealistic to want to accustom a community to continuous self-expression. Participation quickly runs out of steam and becomes artificial. "Participatory" and similar broadcasts should probably consist of a mixed collection of parts varying according to the possibilities and aspirations of each individual community.

Similarly, in the case of light video, experience has shown that it is naïve to believe that a system can be made to work immediately in the hands of the majority, and in particular of the under-privileged for whom it was primarily intended. It is a well-known law of sociology that communication is relayed through indispensable intermediaries, who transmit, extend and amplify it. These intermediaries are by nature and by their social position more active and more committed than other people. They often belong to the so-called middle classes, which appear to show a greater propensity towards participation. It is in fact from these very middle classes that young "intellectuals" have emerged who are prepared to conduct a certain type of social and cultural activity and have found a favourable vehicle in video, as in CTV. Is this state of affairs to be deplored, to be stigmatised as cultural neo-colonialism , as has been suggested in some of the reports on video? Is it not preferable, on the contrary, to make better use of normal communication relays by training "mediators" who can gradually bring cultural activities to other social strata, which are less inclined towards participation. As one of the UK reports puts it "democracy must be learnt".

2. Research, information, exchange of documents

In order to promote research, the Council of Europe should give its moral, if not its material, support to certain projects. It should recommend them for the attention of the appropriate authorities in each country and help to ensure that the results are widely disseminated.

With this in mind, the experts propose setting up a "group of observers" (or "advisers") to assist Council of Europe officials in selecting pilot experiments, choosing research workers and their methods, distributing information on research and experimentation and setting up a circuit for exchanging software.

- The members of this group, which should number 4 or 5, would be selected by the various national experts. They would meet regularly and would, of course, remain continuously in touch with each other.

- They would establish criteria for the selection of experiments to be sponsored by the Council of Europe. They would decide, for each individual case, the best method of scientific observation. This might take several forms:

  - Research conducted by institutions and/or researchers appointed by the group and who would act as "national correspondents".

  - Research conducted by members of the group themselves according to a jointly defined methodology.

  - Research conducted by the group in the form of "itinerant observation": members would pay regular visits to experiments to follow their development (method already used within the Council of Europe).

Some experts have suggested that the group should devise a standardised research method to provide a model for the responsible authorities and research workers in each country. A general pointer may already be given in this respect. Research on community media should go beyond traditional survey methods, which are inadequate, and create "social observatories" giving a live picture of how technology is fitting into the social context. Thus the external observer must be supplemented by the participant-observer who, by living through the experiment, will perceive certain of its dimensions in more realistic terms. Furthermore, these observers should constitute multidisciplinary teams and by examining experiments from different points of view, they will achieve a more complete understanding.

- The group would set up a permanent information network between the interested institutions, groups and individuals in every country. The most significant information might well be published in the form of condensed reports appearing at regular intervals. These documents might also take the form of a newsletter or perhaps simply an annotated bibliography.

- The information network should be backed up by a software exchange network intended to illustrate different experiments. This network would thus constitute a catalogue permanently kept up to date and could be used not only by researchers, but also by all those who are endeavouring to promote new forms of communication in the field.

ANNEXE I
APPENDIX I

LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Président du colloque/Chairman of the colloquy

M Robert WANGERMEE
Directeur Général
Radiodiffusion Télévision Belge
Emissions Françaises
Boulevard Auguste Reyers 52
B 1040 BRUXELLES/Belgique Belgium

Auteurs d'études/Authors of studies

Dr. Thomas A BAUER
Institut für Kommunikationswissenschaft
Sackstrasse 17
A 8010 GRAZ/Autriche Austria

M Francesco CAVALLI-SFORZA
Via Fatebenesorelle 18
2012 MILANO/Italie Italy

M Richard DUNN
EMI
Film and Theatre Corporation Ltd
P O Box 4QX
30-31 Golden Square
LONDON W1A 4QX/Royaume-Uni United Kingdom

M Roberto FAENZA (Excusé/Apologised)
Via Pozzetti 1
BOLOGNA/Italie Italy

M Patrice FLICHY
Institut National de l'Audio-visuel
Voie des Pilotes
94360 BRY-SUR-MARNE/France

International Institute of Communications
représenté par Mr Peter M LEWIS
Tavistock House East
Tavistock Square
LONDON WC1H 9GL/Royaume-Uni United Kingdom

M Manfred JENKE (Excusé/Apologised)
Director
Westdeutscher Rundfunk
Appellhofplatz
5 KOLN/RFA FRG

Mme Franca KLAVER
Professeur à l'Université d'Amsterdam
20 Kroonlaan
HILVERSUM/Pays-Bas Netherlands

Mr Peter M LEWIS
17 Southernhay Avenue
Clifton Wood
BRISTOL BS8 4TJ/Royaume-Uni United Kingdom

Mme Holde LHOEST
Attachée à la Direction Générale
Radiodiffusion Télévision Belge
Emissions françaises
Boulevard Auguste Reyers 52
B 1040 BRUXELLES/Belgique Belgium

M Filippo M de SANCTIS (Excusé/Apologised)
Via Thailandai 12
00144 ROME/Italie Italy

M Larry SOULE
19 Hillside
Denby Dale
Nr HUDDERSFIELD, Yorkshire/Royaume-Uni United Kingdom

Directeurs de projets/Projects Directors

M René BERGER
15 Avenue Tissot
1006 LAUSANNE/Suisse Switzerland

M Augustin GIRARD (Excusé/Apologised)
Chef du Service des Etudes et Recherches
Secretariat d'Etat à la Culture
4 rue d'Aboukir
75002 PARIS/France

Autres experts/Other experts

M Paolo BALDI
Centre de Télévision de la Faculté de
Psychologie et des Sciences de l'Education
3 Place de l'Université
1211 GENEVE/Suisse Switzerland

M Jean-François BARBIER-BOUVET
Chargé d'Etude
Ministère de la Culture et le l'Environnement
4 rue d'Aboukir
75002 PARIS/France

./.

M Michael BARRETT
Project Director
Channel 40
161 Fishermead Boulevard
Fishermead
MILTON KEYNES MK6 2AB/Royaume-Uni United Kingdom

M BETHELL
BBC Radio Cleveland
P O Box 194
91/3 Linthorpe Road
MIDDLESBOROUGH, Cleveland TS1 5DG/Royaume-Uni
United Kingdom

M François BILLETDOUX (Excusé/Apologised)
Radio France
Groupe de Prospectives, Pièce 4231
116 Avenue du Président Kennedy
75786 PARIS CEDEX 16/France

M Kurt BLAUKOPF (Excusé/Apologised)
Directeur
MEDIACULT
Institut international pour les communications
audio-visuelles et le développement culturel
Metternichgasse 12
A 1030 WIEN/Autriche Austria

Miss Monica BOETHIUS
The Swedish Local Radio
Broadcasting Corporation
Box 556
S 101 27 STOCKHOLM/Suède Sweden

M Jean-Pierre DUBOIS-DUMEE
Résidence Le France
4 Square Léon Blum, Apt 101
92800 PUTEAUX/France

M José Manuel FERREIRA DE ALENQUER
Ingénieur
Radiotelevisão Portuguesa
Av Brasil 53-5°-E
LISBOA 5/Portugal

M Robert GERBEX
Coordination Scolaire Romande
Couvaloup 13
1005 LAUSANNE/Suisse Switzerland

M Helmut GREULICH (Excusé/Apologised)
Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen
Essenheimer Landstrasse
6500 MAINZ-LERCHENBERG/RFA FRG

Comité de l'Education Extrascolaire et du Développement culturel/
Committee for Out-of-School Education and Cultural Development

M Henry INGBERG
Secrétaire d'Administration
Ministère de la Culture Française
Galerie Ravenstein 4-7
B 1000 BRUXELLES/Belgique Belgium

Mrs Olga LINNE (Excusée/Apologised)
Danmarks Radio
TV-Byen
2860 Søborg
COPENHAGEN/Danemark Denmark

M German PORRAS-OLALLA
Sous-Directeur général et chef du Cabinet des Etudes et Législations
Ministère de l'Information et du Tourisme
Avenue Generalissimo 39
MADRID/Espagne Spain

M Raymond RAVAR
Directeur
Institut National Supérieur des Arts du Spectacle et Techniques de Diffusion
Rue Thérésienne 8
B 1000 BRUXELLES/Belgique Belgium

Mme Monique SAUVAGE
Institue National de l'Audio-visuel
Voie des Pilotes
94360 BRY-SUR-MARNE/France

M Albert SCHARF (Excusé/Apologised)
Bayerischer Rundfunk
Postfach 200508
8-MUNCHEN-2/RFA FRG

Prof. J G STAPPERS
Instituut voor Massacommunicatie
Katholieke Universiteit
Berg en Dalseweg 118
6522 BW-NIJMEGEN/Pays-Bas Netherlands

M Stig SVAERD
Sunnemobacken 20
S 123 48 FARSTA WILL/Suède Sweden

M L'Inspecteur V UYTENBROECK
Louis Hapstraat 92
B 1040 BRUXELLES/Belgique Belgium

Conseil de l'Europe/Council of Europe

M Lionel de ROULET
Directeur Adjoint
Chef de la Division du Développement Culturel/
Deputy Director
Head of the Division for Cultural Development

M Jean RATY
Chef Adjoint de la Division du Développement Culturel/
Deputy Head of the Division for Cultural Development

Mlle Maria Grazia LORIA
Administrateur
Division du Développement Culturel/
Division for Cultural Development

Mme Françoise MALLET
Assistante Administrative Principale
Division du Développement Culturel/
Division for Cultural Development

Mme Marie-Odile MOREL-SIMON
Assistante
Division du Développement Culturel/
Division for Cultural Development

Interprètes/Interpreters

M B CARBIENER

M Luis OSPINA
25 rue de Navarin
75009 PARIS/France

./.

A P P E N D I X II

LIST OF PREPARATORY STUDIES

	Author	Title	Reference
1.	Thomas A BAUER	Cultural development through video experiments in Austria	CCC/DC (76) 94
2.	Francesco CAVALLI-SFORZA	Independent Television Networks in Italy at the turning point fro cable to broadcasting	CCC/DC (76) 92
3.	Richard DUNN	Swindon Viewpoint, an experiment in community television	CCC/DC (76) 98 + Appendix 2
4.	Roberto FAENZA	The radio phenomenon in Italy	CCC/DC (76) 93
5.	International Institute of Communications	The financing of community and public access channels on cable television networks in member countries of the Council of Europe	CCC/DC (76) 97
6.	Manfred JENKE	Telecommunication Development in the Federal Republic of Germany	CCC/DC (76) 83
7.	Mrs Franca KLAVER	Media in the Netherlands	CCC/DC (76) 65
8.	Mrs Anne-Marie LAULAN	Video - a new information system?	CCC/DC (76) 7
9.	Peter M LEWIS	Community control of local radio	CCC/DC (76) 87
10.	Philippo M de SANCTIS	La video libre en Italie (in French only)	CCC/DC (76) 57
11.	Larry SOULE	Two-way radio and socio-cultural development	CCC/DC (76) 96

A P P E N D I X III

AGENDA

1. Opening of the symposium by a representative of the Secretary General (Wednesday 11 May, Room E 11).

2. Introduction to the discussions by the Chairman.

3. Adoption of the agenda.

4. Presentation of preparatory studies.

   4.1 Brief summary of main points by the authors.

   4.2 Description of developments since completion of the reports.

   4.3 Suggestions for further studies in the relevant fields.

5. General lessons to be learned from the preparatory studies:

   5.1 for television authority management

   5.2 for cable television experiment

   5.3 for video experiment

   5.4 for local radio

   5.5 for communications research

   5.6 for Council of Europe action.

6. Secretariat statement on the programme objectives of Committee of Experts on the Mass Media, by Mr Furrer, Head of Division I, Directorate of Legal Affairs.

7. 7.1 Public communication resource centres at local level.

   7.10 Nature and functions.

   7.11 Institutional aspects.

   7.12 Finance

   7.13 In the light of experience and the discussion, is there any need to add to the draft recommendation drawn up in 1975 (see appendix)?

8. Pilot experiments

8.1 Expediency: proposal from the Paris Symposium.

8.2 Definition of specific objectives.

8.3 Selection criteria.

8.4 Evaluation methodology.

9. Suggestions concerning surveys on the colloquy themes.

10. Suggestions concerning surveys on other techniques.

11. Organising a symposium in 1978 (at which all Council for Cultural Co-operation states will be represented), to evaluate work completed and programme future action.

12. Opinion on other parts of the CCC's 1977 programme.

12.1 Meeting of persons responsible for information relay posts (Strasbourg 8-10 November 1977).

12.1.1 Definition of the specific role of the Council of Europe (field to be covered; types of information to be selected; circulation frequency).

12.1.2 Types of institutions to be invited: suggestions.

12.2 Symposium on visual education (Lausanne 6-8 December 1977).

12.20 Statement by Mr Gerbex.

12.21 Discussion.

12.3 Follow-up to the symposium on environment participation and quality of life (Venice March 1977).

12.30 Statement by Mr Berger, Chairman of the Venice Symposium.

12.31 Discussion.

13. Any other business.